

**SOUTH END REVITALIZATION COALITION
NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING
Mt. Carmel Academy
May 21, 2009
6:00p.m.**

Joan Kagan, President and CEO of Square One, Inc., began the meeting by welcoming everyone. She thanked Joe Pasternak of Tazzini Funeral Home for supplying the refreshments for the meeting and arranging for the meeting to be held at Mt. Carmel. She stated the evening consisted of a full agenda and they wanted to get started right away. Ms. Kagan introduced Jesus Arce, present with greetings from Mayor Sarno.

Jesus Arce, Mayoral Aide, stated Mayor Sarno could not be present due to a School Committee meeting occurring simultaneously. The Mayor sent his greetings and excitement for the South End Project and he feels the City is ready for this change. Mayor Sarno also wanted to reassure everyone that he is listening and he hears all the concerns and questions and he takes them all to heart. Mr. Arce explained that is one reason Mayor Sarno is authorizing a Community Development Block Grant of more than five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) for sidewalk reconstruction. He is hearing what is being said and he is reacting to these concerns to make sure everything goes well. Mayor Sarno is looking forward to seeing this project fulfilled. He is ready to see the South End become once again a vibrant place to visit.

Joan Kagan stated they are aware Mayor Sarno is watching the plan carefully and is in full support of it. She explained that all should view the agenda because it will be followed very closely. She introduced Samalid Hogan of the Office of Planning and Economic Development.

Samalid Hogan began speaking about sidewalk reconstruction. She reiterated what Mr. Arce stated about the CDBG for five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) for this reconstruction. She stated most of the reconstruction is on residential streets. Ms. Hogan stated VHB is present with an update on sign details and construction is anticipated for June. She explained she is really excited to begin construction and see some physical work being done.

Ms. Hogan went on to explain that due to all the plans for the South End, the area is attracting developers. She discussed Arlington Court and the plans for development there. There is two to three million dollars (\$2,000,000-\$3,000,000.00) being invested in renovation of abandoned buildings. She went on to explain the idea of a hotel would be materialized and it will be placed on Gardiner Street. Ms. Hogan stated they are looking forward to improving the streets, the area and the quality of life for residents.

Joan Kagan stated a question and answer period will follow the presentations. She wanted all to hold their questions until the end of the presentations. She wanted to note that Representative Coakley-Rivera was in attendance and thank her for her hard work.

Ms. Kagan provided an update. She explained the façade of the Square One headquarters needed uplifting and they were finally going to receive that. She stated the headquarters is located at the corner of Hubbard and Main Streets and thanks to private foundations and grants this was possible. Ms. Kagan stated the work would begin in the summer of 2009 and they are happy to have their façade restored.

Ms. Kagan stated this is one (1) of several meetings for the South End Community and she wanted to reiterate some things. She stated she wanted everyone to stay solution oriented, positive, and forward thinking. She explained this is a window of opportunity that must be seized. The project has the support of the City and has the financial and human resources necessary for a project of this magnitude. She stated there are details to be worked out and she wished to remind all that the South End Revitalization Project was one (1) part of a citywide master plan. South End was identified as the gateway into the City from the south which led to the reservation of human and financial resources for this project. She explained the project is critical to City development.

Ms. Kagan went on to introduce Jerry Hayes of Hayes Development. She explained Mr. Hayes would give an update on the Urban Renewal Plan.

Jerry Hayes began with an update on the Urban Renewal Plan's progress. Hayes Development was contracted by the City of Springfield to provide an amendment to the Urban Renewal Plan that covers the South End. The amendment number is six (6). Mr. Hayes reminded all that an Urban Renewal Plan is a tool to achieve program objectives that are involved with the revitalization of the South End. The elements of Urban Renewal are the acquisition of select properties, the relocation of people who occupy those properties, the demolition of buildings, and the preparation of sites for redevelopment. Mr. Hayes stated a month ago the concept was to add a comprehensive amendment to include projects five (5), six (6) and seven (7). The three (3) projects the amendment would facilitate will be the Emerson Wight expansion, the Ashmun-Marble connector and Marble-Rutledge connector. He wanted to show different ways they could proceed with these projects. He stated the best way to proceed is to focus on near term priorities and on projects where a consensus is already met and place more in depth projects on the back burner to be focused on later.

Mr. Hayes went on to explain out of the three (3) projects that he spoke about, two (2) of them have presented obstacles. He explained they wanted things done in the near term and to have some visible improvements done soon. In addition the City does not have sufficient funding to do all the projects presented in the Urban Renewal Plan. The City does not have the funding for the construction of the road needed to create the Ashmun-Marble Connector. Mr. Hayes stated the projects that require further discussion with the neighborhood councils also need to be placed on hold. He stated they are asking another approach be considered.

Mr. Hayes went on to explain they have set up a revised approach. The revised approach consists of two (2) elements which are the expansion of the Emerson Wight playground by acquiring the properties that sit between the playground and Marble Street and

demolition of the abandoned buildings. He explained there is universal consensus on the expansion of the park between the park and Marble Street. He wanted to know if anyone had any objection to this expansion. He explained there are abandoned properties there that are a threat to public health and safety and negative things could happen within those properties. He stated the idea is to make things simple and focus on the near term.

Mr. Hayes went on to explain the idea for Amendment Seven (7), which would occur later on. The connector roads would need consensus and the financial resources would need to be available for these projects to take place.

Mr. Hayes explained the loose timeline they had in mind. He stated the idea is to receive the proper approvals in the next four to five (4-5) months, so the near term will be the focus and those projects would be implemented early next year. He stated he was not sure when Amendment Seven (7) would be worked on, but he didn't believe it would begin in the next year. He stated they must prioritize their efforts and allocate money to the projects that already have a consensus and would eliminate some major problems. One of the things Mr. Hayes is doing in collaboration with the South End Project Team is driving around the South End neighborhood to mark properties that should be demolished. He stated this is a new concept and different from things they've discussed in the past. Mr. Hayes believes the modification is more practical and more responsive to the near term neighborhood concerns.

A community member asked what the Main Street improvements have to do with the Urban Renewal Plan being discussed.

Mr. Hayes explained the Urban Renewal Plan is separate from the Main Street Improvements and the plan it is not required to take on these improvements. He stated the Main Street improvement bid is set to go out in June and construction is scheduled to begin later in the summer. However, the Urban Renewal Plan is on a separate schedule and the plan is not necessary to do improvements on Main Street.

Mr. Hayes went on to explain the benefits of the new approach of demolishing buildings in the South End. He stated the benefits would be a highly visible impact is achieved sooner, eliminate the dangerous structures to visually improve the neighborhood, continue to reduce residential density in the neighborhood, create additional land resources for home ownership, and avoid scheduling properties for acquisition before it is necessary or likely. He explained that if they do not have consensus and financial resources for the connector, it isn't fair to list someone's residential property. He stated what happens to the properties that are listed in the Urban Renewal Plan is owners stop maintaining them, so they would like to only list properties that are necessary for acquisition as soon as possible.

Mr. Hayes showed a timetable of the plan that was slightly revised since it was viewed the last time. The timetable consisted of:

1. Presenting this concept at the current South End Community Meeting and receiving feedback

2. Coming to the next South End Community Meeting and presenting a map of the properties that are scheduled for demolition.
3. The input from that meeting will be discussed and it will be compiled into an Urban Renewal Plan amendment.

When there is a general consensus between the neighborhood and the City, the plan will move into the work and approval process. Mr. Hayes displayed the remainder of the timetable, which consisted of the steps through the work and approval process.

Mr. Hayes asked Ms. Kagan if she wanted him to take any questions.

Ms. Kagan stated she wanted everyone to hold their questions because she wanted to get into the discussion on the former Gemini site.

She went on to introduce Dan Niche of the Office of Capital Asset Management and Mike Tully of the Parks Department.

Dan Niche introduced himself. He stated he has been working with Mike Tully of the Parks Department to develop a use for the former Gemini site. He explained the City asked for a temporary use for the site and they have come up with the idea of a temporary park. The former Gemini site is a vacant, cleared site and the City has asked the site be made a green site. He explained they wanted something in the South End where people could go and relax.

Mike Tully of the Parks Department began to explain the temporary park idea in further detail. He showed the meeting the plans for the park. He stated they looked at the area and he described what was near the site. He explained Mt. Carmel is near the site and there are also apartment buildings that have been renovated in the vicinity of this site. He stated they believed it would be a perfect space for a courtyard area. The area is not big enough for a recreational field for things such as soccer but they wanted to make it a green area.

Mr. Niche went on to explain the number one (1) intent was to keep all eyes on the park. They want the park to be visible at all times from all angles. Mr. Niche stated they want all to enjoy the area and they have an idea for a dog park, also. He showed a slide of the current conditions of the site and gave a history of the Gemini site. The size of the parcel is about one point eight (1.8) acres of about seventy-eight hundred square feet (7800 sq ft). He stated the parcel is not big enough to lend itself to outdoor recreational activities such as baseball. He stated the project will be done very quickly with enjoyment of the area beginning in the fall.

Mr. Niche went on to describe the project intent was to enjoy this area temporarily, for about three to five (3-5) years. The plan is in three to five (3-5) years the site will be open to developers but in the mean time the City wants something in the South End that will be useful to the neighborhood. Mr. Niche continued on to explain some of the amenities that would be included with this park, which would include better lighting in the area, benches, landscaping, water fountains, sidewalks, and game tables.

Mr. Tully displayed the layout planned for this park. He described which portions would receive the most landscaping, where some of the amenities would be placed and where some of the lighting would be added. He also explained the idea of a dog park being added with fencing around that certain area. He wanted to make it clear that the plans they were presenting for the former Gemini site are not permanent. They wanted feedback and input from the South End community as well. He also explained the display containing the lighting and benches was not permanent either. The display did not show the exact amenities that would be placed in this area. He stated the site has a lot of potential as a park and it would be nice if the future developer would decide to work around the park.

Mr. Tully displayed more plans of what the former Gemini site would look like if it was developed into a temporary park. He described the dog park area. He explained the visual aid included what the park would look like if some transitional paving was done on the area. He went on to explain different areas of the park.

Mr. Niche stated they needed community involvement. They wanted to hear from the neighbors and business owners of this area. He explained he wanted to emphasize this will be a temporary park and they didn't want to make the area into something that would have difficult removal in the future. They wanted a nice area for residents to enjoy themselves.

Representative Coakley-Rivera asked where the idea for a temporary park came from.

Mr. Niche stated it came from the need for more green spaces in the City.

Ms. Coakley-Rivera asked how much the temporary park would cost.

Mr. Niche stated the estimate hasn't been done yet.

Ms. Hogan explained there is a two hundred and twenty-five thousand dollar (\$225,000) CDBG that is designated for parks. The money is designated for design and improvements.

Ms. Coakley-Rivera stated that the former Gemini site is currently a field and no one is attracted to a field. She stated it may be better to leave it as it is. She explained the park idea is great but she does not like the type of people this park may attract. She stated she is concerned with the residents and the fact that this park may draw more negative attention to the area. She stated the residents would probably rather have a field for three (3) years then have drug addicts and prostitutes hanging in a park near their homes. Ms. Coakley-Rivera stated maintenance was not discussed and neither was the policing issue.

Mr. Niche stated the Parks Department will maintain the park.

Ms. Coakley-Rivera stated she just feels to place a park here and have it gone in three (3) years is a waste.

A community member stated if the money was being invested in a permanent space it would be a little different. He stated using the space and money for something like a small police station would be more helpful to the community.

Ms. Hogan stated the money is given for green spaces but she wanted to know if the idea of leaving the space with just grass and trees with no amenities was something they could propose for this area. She stated the concern that was mentioned about policing of this area was valid also in showing the amenities proposed for this area may not be necessary.

A community member asked why the area would not be used for a permanent park.

Ms. Hogan stated the parcel is large and it is a great area for redevelopment in the South End.

A community member stated the former Gemini factory was vacant fifteen to twenty (15-20) years. He wanted to know who may be interested in redeveloping this site.

Ms. Hogan stated this is open for discussion and they will come back to this question at the end of the presentations.

Ms. Kagan reiterated that the questions should be held until the end of the presentations in order for the agenda to be fulfilled.

Ms. Hogan stated they wanted to get a consensus on what the community would like to happen with this parcel. She explained feedback and input were necessary from the community.

Ms. Kagan asked if there was a general consensus on banning the idea for a temporary park. She explained the alternative that was suggested was a large, green area with trees and grass and no amenities. She asked all those in favor of the alternative idea raise their hands.

Ms. Coakley-Rivera asked if the residents could maybe come up with ideas. She stated by giving only two (2) options their input is not really being utilized. She didn't want the process to be rushed because the decision does include South End residents.

Ms. Kagan explained she was attempting to see if there was a necessity to come up with another idea or if the residents simply agreed with the alternative. The plans for the area were open for discussion and ideas were welcomed. She explained they are taking the input of the community but they also needed to get to the discussion of the Main Street improvements.

Mr. Niche asked if five (5) minutes could be given for comments.

Ms. Kagan stated five (5) minutes could be taken to discuss this issue.

A community member living on the corner of Morris and Dale Streets explained her home overlooks the former Gemini site. The resident explained she does not care for the idea of a park and is definitely against the idea of a dog park. The woman wanted to know who would maintain and clean the dog park daily.

Another community member stated this woman has lived in her home for forty (40) years and has been picking up litter all those years so her opinion shouldn't be taken lightly.

Mr. Rico Daniele, business owner in the South End and Planning Board Commissioner, stated parks in the City are a great idea but this park would be temporary. He explained they have parks in the City that need maintenance now, so the money can be used for these areas. He stated whatever the plans are for this parcel, they should remain as simple as possible if it will be removed in three (3) years. He stated he feels like the plan means well but he feels it may be overzealous.

Mr. Niche stated the Parks Department is moving toward the idea of a park. He explained there is some cost sharing with the Emerson Wight Project.

A community member asked the projected cost of this project. He pointed out the South End does not have a senior center.

Mr. Niche stated a small estimate is about two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000).

Another community member stated she agreed with the idea of a senior center being place in this area.

A community member stated rather than spending money on a temporary park they should spend the money for something more permanent. The elderly community in the South End is in need of a senior center and this may be a spot for such a use.

Mr. Niche stated the area was being designated as an area for the community to gather.

A community member stated a small part of the parcel could be used for this senior center. She stated the whole parcel wouldn't be necessary for a small senior center. That is a place for the community to gather.

A community member stated he sees this site everyday and he feels it would be a huge improvement to see some more lighting and to have the grass maintained. He explained on the renovations done to the apartments on the Central Street side are wonderful and more lighting in the area would be great. These lights would provide more safety and he believes it would be easier to maintain if it is left as a field. The people that live in the apartment complex that overlook the former Gemini site should be concerned. He stated they could use a safe place to play for the complex. He explained in preparing the site for

future development, something that is difficult to remove would not be a good idea. He suggested there may even be a benefit given for not overspending on a project like this.

Ms. Kagan stated the ideas she has heard about this parcel include a senior center, senior center with a small park and placing more lighting and surveillance in the area. She explained each of these ideas will be reviewed. She asked if there were any more questions or ideas. Ms. Kagan stated City Councilors Bud Williams and Jimmy Ferrara were in attendance.

Ms. Kagan proceeded to introduce Mr. John Becchard of VHB, Inc. and stated he would be giving an update on the Main Street improvements.

Mr. Becchard stated he wanted to go through a few things and explain them. He stated his focus would be taking a look back and presenting more information on ideas that weren't fully explained at previous meetings. The balance of pedestrians, bicycling, parking, residents and businesses would be discussed. The original scope was to improve Main Street in the South End from Howard Street to what was dubbed Columbus Circle. The improvements would include the signals at Union Street, Central and Fremont Streets, Montpelier and Gardiner Streets and Broad Street and Wendell Place. Mr. Becchard stated the project scope was modified based on input from the community meetings. The scope was extended to include up to Mill Street by improving the lighting and sidewalks along Main Street and along Locust Street. He went on to explain the input from the community meetings also led to the idea of removing the pedestrian signal at Montpelier and Gardiner Streets. Mr. Becchard stated that based on information from the Police Department the need for this signal has depleted due to the addition of a Broad Street signal that is planned for the future. Mr. Becchard went on to further explain the scope of the project. He stated it includes roadway resurfacing, improving sidewalks, new street lighting, new traffic signals, landscaping and doing crosswalks. Community participation was necessary for these plans. He stated an Action Plan is being discussed with three point eight million dollars (\$3.8 million) being used for construction and it is due to go to bid this summer.

Mr. Becchard began to explain some of the things his firm was looking at and investigating. These things included vehicle movements, vehicle delay, pedestrian accommodation, parking impacts, level of service and accidents. He explained that when they balanced the needs of all these entities which included pedestrians, bicycles, vehicles, businesses, and parking, they realized there will have to be a trade off. He stated they looked at the intersection of Main and Union Streets and they looked at alternatives for improved traffic patterns. They viewed what was already in place, what a preferred alternative would be and how the balance of turning vehicles, pedestrian accommodations, turning lanes and no turn signals could be worked out. He stated the intersection at Main and Union Streets does not line up at a perfect ninety (90) degree angle. Due to this they had to look at improved signal operations through split advanced phasing. He explained the same issue occurs at the Broad and Wendell Place intersection. Mr. Becchard showed the audience a display of what Main Street's current conditions are. He explained the signals are antiquated and there are no sensors in the pavement. The

lack of sensors in the pavement make it difficult for pedestrians to cross and for turning cars to turn, which can shut down the intersection. He stated they are looking at different options to upgrade the project. He stated by looking at the number of accidents at this intersection and the amount of traffic that goes through the intersection they can devise a system that will work for the unique characteristics of each one. He explained the number of accidents at the Main and Union Streets intersection from two thousand and six to two thousand and eight (2006-2008) was thirty-nine (39) and most of those accidents were angled and rear end tight. More than eighty percent (80%) of those accidents occurred when someone was rear ended trying to make a turn. He displayed the statistics for these accidents. Mr. Becchard went on to explain that placing a left turn bay here would force the elimination of fourteen (14) parking spaces on one side, six (6) parking spaces on another side, ten (10) parking spaces on another side and five (5) parking spaces on the other side. He pointed to the corresponding side of the street on his plans so the audience was aware of which side he was discussing. He stated the businesses felt this would cripple them so they began to think of ways to alleviate the problem at the intersection without negatively impacting the businesses. The alternative to the left turn bay was to place bulb outs on the corners and reduce pedestrian crossings distances which would retain the parking for the businesses on both sides. This idea also included placing sensors into the pavement giving consideration to lead phases and lag phases in the traffic signal. He explained this means when moving in the southbound direction, the signal will turn green first and do this with the traffic light going northbound towards I-91. He stated the discussion of the first plan with the businesses and community was not very successful. The idea was dead on arrival due to the negative impact it had on the businesses parking. He wanted to reiterate that the balance of pedestrians, bicycles, trucks, parking, and motorist safety was also a consideration in thinking of a plan for this intersection. Mr. Becchard stated the alternative, which they actually went forward with, was safer for pedestrians, provided a higher level of service, reduced the amount of accidents and did not harm the businesses by impacting their parking. He explained the plans for the bulb outs do not eliminate parking, but they protect the parking that is against the curbline. He stated that when doing projects like this it is important to look ten (10) years into the future when deciding which signals to place at the intersections. There will be changes in things like traffic patterns and they do not want the traffic signals and sensors in the pavement to be ineffective in a few short months. They must look toward the future and with the revitalization on Main Street occurring they would like equipment that is up to date and will function well in the future.

Mr. Becchard began to explain the other plans for Main Street. He displayed the current conditions of Main Street and used this display to show where the improvements would be made. He stated the lighting, the crosswalks, and landscaping are all things that are being renovated. He wanted to point out pedestrian safety is vital to the revitalization and ADA approved crossings are one (1) aspect they plan on incorporating.

Mr. Becchard went on to explain Main Street at the intersection of Central and Fremont Streets. He stated that this intersection doesn't line up like a cross due to Fremont Street being slightly north of Central Street. He stated they didn't have the opportunity to place bulb outs here and reduce the crossing time for pedestrians but they plan on fully

actuating the signal and placing sensors into the pavement. They viewed the number of accidents and what is necessary here. The southbound movement on Main Street would receive the green light first to allow for the turn onto Central Street and the northbound Main Street would go next.

Ms. Hogan asked Mr. Becchard if the cars turning onto Central Street would get the green light first.

Mr. Becchard stated this is true. He stated this was the concept devised after all the statistics for the intersection were taken, such as number of accidents and number of cars turning. He stated people were in the field counting the amount of cars turning left and right and there is a higher percentage of cars turning left onto Central Street, rather than turning left from Main onto Fremont. Due to the streets not lining up perfectly, they have decided to allow the cars turning from Central Street to have the ability to turn first with a delayed green light. The main reason for the delays now at this intersection is due to the lack of sensors in the pavement. The signal allows thirty-eight (38) seconds for all cars to pass through the green signal before the light turns yellow. Mr. Becchard stated the pavement sensors are being used in places on State Street, which is a small camera, that leaves the green signal as long as it is needed but up to its maximum time.

Ms. Coakley-Rivera asked if the sidewalks would be bumped out at Main and Central Streets.

Mr. Becchard stated they could not do the bulb outs at this intersection.

Ms. Coakley-Rivera stated she is asking because some people do not want the bulb outs at Main and Union Streets due to the risk of losing customers. If the bulb outs are placed here some customers may get frustrated with finding a parking space and drive off.

A community member stated there is some that want the bulb outs so there is no illegal parking in front of the building.

Mr. Becchard stated he would go back to this issue but he wanted to make sure he had enough time to finish the presentation.

He went on to explain the plans for the intersection at Gardiner and Montpelier Streets. He stated they plan to remove the signal here, improve the vegetation, replace the sidewalks and narrow the roadway slightly to improve on operations. Mr. Becchard showed the audience the spots where narrowing the roadway is anticipated. He stated they wanted to maintain pedestrian crossing and access to businesses.

Mr. Becchard began to explain Wendell Place and Broad Street. He stated there are two (2) areas of illegal parking at this intersection. He showed the audience the areas he was discussing, which are north of Wendell Place and south of Broad Street. The signal will be replaced to some degree and the City plans on enforcement against these illegal parking spaces. He stated without the illegal parking taking place, a left turn bay going

onto Broad Street will allow the lanes to run clear. The curbline will be brought out and the police have been ticketing for the illegal parking.

A community member asked if sensors would be placed at this location also.

Mr. Becchard stated sensors would be placed at this intersection to extend the green signal time and clear the traffic lane.

A community member emphasized the green light at Wendell Place is very short and does not allow enough time to get through it.

Mr. Becchard stated he is aware of this situation and the plan is to place sensors and tubes in the roadway for easier clearance. He went on to explain how the sensors will work. He stated that if it is only a few cars at the light it will change quickly but if there is more cars, the sensor will extend the green light for the clearance of more cars.

Mr. Becchard went on to explain the changes they have planned for the Elmwood and York Streets intersection. He stated they plan to narrow the roadway and install sensors at this intersection also.

Mr. Becchard went on to explain the changes they plan to make at the intersection that has been coined Columbus Circle. He stated the Circle currently has nice trees, they aren't large though. He explained what they have done so far is surveys and traffic studies, they've taken input at community meetings, and they have come up with a preliminary design for this intersection. Mr. Becchard stated the schedule they have set for the South End Revitalization Project. He stated the final design will be done on June 10, 2009 with bids on the project going out between June 10th and June 25th. The award for the bid will be given June 30th and construction is scheduled to begin in July through November.

Mr. Becchard explained the plans for the street signs also. He stated the current street signs are in brick and they plan to do a different design for these signs when renovations begin. He showed the audience a slide of the streets signs they had in mind. He stated they would be taking input from the community on this issue as well as the others.

A community member asked what department Mr. Becchard was working for.

Mr. Becchard explained he was not working for the City but he is a consultant hired by the City.

A community member asked what the plans were for Howard Street. He stated that is a good place to start because of the school children.

Mr. Becchard responded that they are starting the project at Howard Street and it would receive new lighting and sidewalks. He explained they did not plan to narrow the roadway but they are planning to improve them.

A community member stated he believes the plans for the Union Street intersection are good for the convenience of cars but foot traffic is important also. He stated in pictures of the South End from twenty (20) years ago there was foot traffic and that is necessary for a healthy business and a healthy City. He stated he is aware the elimination of some parking spaces will not be good for businesses and he understands part of the goal is to get more businesses into the South End. He stated it is important to keep the parking that is there now and he thinks the preferred plan of the engineering firm makes a lot of sense. He stated the sensors in the traffic signals will definitely aid in getting cars through the intersection.

A community member stated he is also in favor of the preferred plan as a patron who crosses this intersection everyday. He stated it is good for senior citizens and children that walk in the South End.

A community member stated they think the bulb outs are a good idea and he agrees with the plan also. He stated he doesn't foresee a real traffic flow issue with this plan.

Ms. Coakley-Rivera stated all the tedious work that goes into planning this revitalization goes unnoticed. She wanted to applaud all for their work on this project. She went on to say there was five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) designated for the sidewalks and she would like to know which residential streets were included in this and when the work on this aspect of the project would begin.

Mr. Becchard stated Mr. Al Chwalek and the Department of Public Works staff are working on this portion of the project now and they will be integrating it into the plan VHB has for the revitalization. He stated he is not sure what streets are included and where they plan to start the re-paving.

Ms. Coakley-Rivera asked who decides which streets will be done.

Ms. Hogan stated she saw drafts for these ideas and most of the streets are included.

Mr. Hanson ensured the community that a listing of the streets will be created.

Ms. Coakley-Rivera asked what was going to be done about the South End being a densely populated area. She stated the issue of absentee landlords and undesirables need to be handled in some way. She stated areas on residential streets need to be rezoned to Residence A if we are serious about stabilizing the community. She explained there are multiple multi-family units and to combat this issue we need single family owner-occupied living spaces in the South End.

A community member asked if there was \$3.8 million being spent on Main Street for the sidewalks, lighting, and landscaping.

Mr. Hanson stated this was correct.

A community member stated she heard plans for the homes on Marble Street. She asked if the houses on Richlieu Street were included.

Mr. Hayes stated the plans he has include Marble but he will take a look at Hillside and Richlieu Streets also. He stated on Adams Street there is a former hospital and on Abrego Street there is a row of boarded up buildings. He explained he is creating a list of properties between Central and Marble Street and Main to Richlieu Street.

A community member asked if Main Street properties will be included.

Mr. Hayes stated there is a building on the corner of Main and Adams Streets that he will view also. He stated this is the opportunity to rid the neighborhood of vacant and abandoned properties that look awful and they are hazardous.

A community member asked about a property on Montpelier Street also.

Mr. Hayes will also take a look at the building on the corner of Montpelier Street. He will create a list of these properties with the City staff and that will be presented at a community meeting for input.

A community member asked if the consent of City Council was given for the acquisition of these properties.

Mr. Hayes stated they were informed and gave consent.

A community member expressed concern with the boarded up buildings on Main Street. He stated there are buildings on Main Street that have been boarded up for fifteen to twenty (15-20) years. He stated people buy these properties and move on with no intentions of keeping the properties up. He explained he spoke with code enforcement before and they are not listening but he feels this is a real issue. He stated the windows being broken shouldn't be the only deterring factor. The windows will be fine. He stated if there is no one planning on occupying these buildings in three to six (3-6) months the boards need to come down off the windows.

Mr. Hayes stated he wanted to add something to that thought. He explained this is not only a problem with commercial properties but with residential properties as well. He stated there are many properties that are structurally sound and that could be rehabbed. He stated pressure being applied to the owner is necessary and resources and tools should be available for the owner so they can make changes.

Mr. Rico Daniele explained when people come into the South End from other areas and when they view these boarded up properties they speed down Main Street to get out of the neighborhood. He stated someone needs to put there foot down and say this is unacceptable. He stated the businesses in the area are hanging on and the South End does have a heart. Mr. Daniele's business has moved around the South End rather than moving

out of it and there isn't as much business generated in the South End. He stated they are family in the South End and that is what keeps a lot of them in the South End.

Mr. Hanson stated one of the goals in making improvements to Main Street is improving the front door to the businesses on Main Street. He stated this includes the empty store fronts in order to make them more attractive to future investors. Mr. Hanson stated they plan on bringing new investment into the City by the City making an investment in the infrastructure.

A community member wanted to know what exactly is being done about the properties that have been boarded up for years.

Mr. Hanson stated improving Main Street is in the works. He explained they are looking into facade improvement programs as part of the revitalization to help cover the cost of some of this.

Mr. Daniele stated in the mean time the wood needs to come down.

Another community member stated there are empty lots on Dwight Street that have been fenced.

Mr. Hanson stated the City has fenced these properties.

The community member stated this area could be used for parking. She explained it is hard for fire trucks and other vehicles to get through the one way and the fenced area should be used for parking.

Mr. Hanson explained there have been a number of conversations with the property owners in the Hollywood section and they aren't having any problems with parking.

A community member stated parking permits should be distributed to tenants.

Another community member stated there was an idea of helping absentee property owners find resources but the property owners that are present should be given help also. She explained this is a part of stabilizing the neighborhood.

Ms. Coakley-Rivera asked if there was a consensus on rezoning the empty lots so no more multi-family housing could be placed in the South End. She wanted to know if this was something the residents wanted.

Ms. Angie Florian of the South End Citizens Council stated the South End Citizens Council went before the Planning Board to have a lot changed from Residence C to Residence B. She explained they wanted Residence A zoning but the Board did not support that change. She stated they could go for Residence B because she believes that's what will be supported.

Ms. Coakley-Rivera stated stabilization is needed in the area and there are enough rental units in the South End. She stated they need a commitment to doing this for these properties.

A community member stated this is something that can be accomplished with SRA owned properties but she is not sure how it works if they are private properties.

Mr. Hayes explained the owner has a right to speak at a public hearing just as the community applying for the zone change.

Ms. Coakley-Rivera stated this will affect homeowners in the future, not current residences. She stated any unit that will be placed after the zone change will be single family units. She explained the issue is too many rental units. She stated one of the only reasons some of the multi-family homes aren't dilapidated now is because they are owner occupied. She stated if everyone is serious about revitalizing the South End this needs to be considered as an option.

Mr. Hanson stated they do realize there are some zoning issues with the South End, including Main Street zoning which is zoned Business B. This zoning does not encourage any neighborhood type businesses coming into the South End. In regards to rezoning multi-family homes, Mr. Hanson stated there will always be multi-family housing unless something tragic like a fire burns them down. He stated simply changing the zoning will not affect the current multi-family homes.

Ms. Coakley-Rivera stated she understood this but she is discussing lots that are currently vacant and lots that will become vacant in the future. She stated this shouldn't be a big deal if revitalization is occurring. She stated a map should be viewed and certain areas should be zoned Residence A.

Mr. Peter Gagliardi of HAP stated that it seems logical to place owner occupied single family homes on some vacant lots. Homeowners and single family owner occupied units are what make up a neighborhood. He stated when we succeed in doing that a different type of environment will be created and a healthy mix with the rental properties will also be created. He explained while affordable housing is his business, economic diversity is necessary in any neighborhood. Mr. Gagliardi went on to explain it is only fair to the neighborhoods disadvantaged and it is the only thing that works for the City. Whether this is achieved by zoning or something else, these single family homes are necessary.

Ms. Coakley-Rivera stated this will also create incentives to live in the South End. The City of Springfield has great programs for first time home buyers. She stated people who are sick of paying high rent may see this and want to move into the single family home next door that they will eventually own. She stated she wants to move forward and draft whatever paperwork is necessary to begin the process for this zone change.

Mr. Rico Daniele was in favor of this motion by Representative Coakley-Rivera.

Another community member stated they also strongly agree with this.

Mr. Hanson stated they can discuss the process further at a later time.

Ms. Coakley-Rivera stated she understands but she wants to move on this quickly. She stated if not people will build more of these multi-family homes and will be absent from the area within ten (10) years. She stated where there are single family homes in the City, those streets are nice and they are more stable. She explained she is not ignorant to the fact that this is not going to be an easy process but she wants to get it started and the South End needs this.

Mr. Hanson stated the Zoning Modernization Project was about updating the Zoning Ordinance. He explained they did not go neighborhood by neighborhood and street by street and make changes.

Ms. Coakley-Rivera asked if some areas were changed.

Mr. Hanson stated this was true but it was due to the elimination of some zones. He stated the process was not identifying every parcel that needed a zone change in the City.

Ms. Coakley-Rivera stated she understands this but we need to do what the South End Revitalization Project was intended to do and that is stabilizing the neighborhood.

Mr. Hanson stated he will talk to Mr. Phil Dromey, Deputy Director of Planning for the City of Springfield, when he returns to his office.

Ms. Coakley-Rivera stated she will be speaking with him also.

Mr. Hanson stated Ms. Kagan will wrap up the meeting and tell what will be discussed at the next community meeting.

Ms. Kagan stated the date is not confirmed yet for the next community meeting.

Mr. Tully advertised for a tree planting program occurring May 30th, 2009. He explained he had flyers for everyone.

Ms. Coakley-Rivera asked if there was a contact person for this event.

Mr. Tully stated he is the contact and he works with the Parks Department.

Ms. Kagan stated the things that will be discussed include an update on the Urban Renewal Plan by Jerry Hayes, specifically the properties targeted for demolition. An update on the Gemini site will also be given by Dan Nietzsche and Mike Tully. They will be discussing alternatives besides the current idea for the site. She stated the boarded up properties of the South End will also be discussed and the plans for what to do about these properties. The zone change of empty lots to Residence A zoning will also be

discussed and prior to the next community meeting the options for this will be discussed with the proper City Departments.

Ms. Kagan thanked all for coming and asked that they attend the next community meeting as well.